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I.

CASE OF SPECTRAL ILLUSIONS,
WITH OBSERVATIONS. BY RO-
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ON the 20th of October, 1830, I was requested to see E. R., a child, eleven years of age, residing in Union Court, Cripplegate, who had become blind on the morning of that day. I was informed that she had had severe inflammation of the gums, about a week before, which was attended with considerable swelling, and some redness of the face, together with a good deal of headach, at times. Plant leaves had been applied, with the effect of relieving the inflammation and swelling, but the pain of the head increased, and she had some confusion of ideas, with slight wandering delirium. The fever, however, was said to have been trifling, and her bodily strength not affected. In the morning of the 18th, she lost the power of distinguishing colors, all objects appearing white, or black, or some intermediate shade. She continued in this state till the morning of the 20th, the day on which I saw her, when, on her awaking, it was found that she could see only portions of things placed before her eyes, and, in about two hours after, was unable to distinguish light at all: a blister had been applied to the back of the

neck the night before, and was then discharging.

Upon examination of the eyes, the pupils were found free from opacity or cloudiness; they were moderately dilated, even in the full light of day, and she said she could perceive no light; but upon exposing the eye suddenly to the action of a strong light, by closing, and afterwards quickly opening the lids, the pupils immediately contracted. The retina and the humors of the eye appeared therefore to be free from disease. She complained of pain across the forehead; the pulse was rather full and of good strength, though not quick; the skin cool; the tongue white. She had had a costive evacuation since morning, which contained an *ascaris lumbricoides*.

Upon inquiring further into the history of the case, I received the following extraordinary account:—About seven weeks before, on the 30th of last August, she was very much alarmed by the apparition of a man at the window, dressed in what she termed a coffin dress, which apparition recurred the next day, and again after an interval of eight days. On the morning of the 13th of September, she saw most distinctly her father standing at the foot of the bed, with his arms folded across his breast. She immediately burst into tears, believing, as she said, that her father, who

was absent from home in America, was dead. He then spoke to her, saying, weep not,—weep not,—and shook his head; then, shortly after, calling upon the Saviour twice, he appeared to fall backwards, and, as she expressed herself, vanished into the air. A short time previous to the appearance of her father, she fancied she heard the looking-glass struck as with a stick, and then saw it fall into pieces, and yet, as she remarked to her mother, it could not be, as the glass still remained in its situation, and entire. From this time, she became the sport of spectral illusions of various descriptions. Upon one occasion, her mother being with her, she was getting out of bed, when, suddenly drawing her foot back again, she started with horror to the other side of the bed, asserting that she had been laid hold of by the cold hand of her dead father. At another time, she exclaimed, that the room was full of spirits, though, when questioned about them, she said she neither heard nor saw anything, but that she felt conscious of their presence. During the whole of this period, though unable to suppress her terror at the illusions, she was conscious that they had no real existence, and reasoned correctly about them with her friends. Her bodily health was very bad; she suffered much from headaches, with giddiness and beating in the temples, and, as was reported by the mother, more than once expressed her apprehensions that she should lose her sight.

Her observations were generally remarkably intelligent, and she was perfectly consistent in her accounts, though her recollection of many things which had occurred, was obviously impaired.

She was ordered four leeches to the temples, and directed to take a grain of calomel, with four grains of jalap, every six hours.

On the 22d, I saw her again. The leeches had bled well, the sight returning almost immediately after. She could then distinguish colors and objects at a considerable distance, though some degree of headach was still felt at times. The bowels had been freely opened, the evacuations being very dark and green; the tongue was rather white; the pulse natural. The calomel and jalap powders were directed to be continued at intervals of eight hours.

On the 26th, the sight still remained imperfect, and she complained that there seemed to be a mist before her eyes; the pulse was natural; the bowels open, the stools still dark-colored, green, and slimy. She complained also of pain across the forehead, and her memory was, in some respects, impaired. She had totally forgotten how to read, and mistook one letter for another; not that she was unable to see, and distinguish the difference between them, but she had lost the power of connecting the proper sounds of the letters with the arbitrary character representing those sounds. Leeches were again applied to the temples, and as her mouth had become somewhat tender, the powders of calomel and jalap were omitted, and one compounded of jalap and the super-tartrate of potass was ordered to be taken every morning instead.

On the 28th, she could see nearly as well as ever, and her recollection had returned. She could now read distinctly; but the abdomen felt tense, and was prominent. She complained of gnawing pains of the bowels at times, and the

motions were still dark-colored and slimy.

From this time she rapidly improved, and soon recovered the perfect use of her eye-sight, together with her usual health and spirits. She experienced no return of the spectral illusions after the first application of leeches to the temples.

I was induced to trust this case chiefly to the action of purgatives, as, from the presence of a lumbricus in the stool voided on the morning of the 20th, I concluded that the amaurotic symptoms might, in a great measure at least, depend upon the irritation arising from worms in the intestinal canal; and I was subsequently induced to persevere in the practice, both by the relief afforded, and by the morbid nature of the excretions from the bowels, though no worms were afterwards observed to come from her.

The subject of the appearance of spectral illusions in certain states of disease, is one of great difficulty; and, notwithstanding the elaborate researches of Dr. Hibbert, still involved in considerable obscurity. The forms under which these illusions were presented to the mind of this child, may, perhaps, in part be accounted for. Thus, the first apparition of a man in a coffin dress, may probably have arisen from the strong impression made upon her by the funeral dress, and general appearance of a sister, who died early in the spring of last year. And afterwards, it was perhaps natural that her illusions should be connected with the recollections of an absent parent; especially as considerable uncertainty existed in the minds of his friends as to his welfare. Again, the exclamations which were heard by her as pro-

ceeding from him, were probably connected with the wishes expressed in his behalf by his wife; who, in consequence of the infidel tendency of his principles, was in great anxiety as to his spiritual state. Still, however, there remains to be accounted for, the vividness of these impressions, causing them to be mistaken, upon their first appearance at least, for actual occurrences; and that, notwithstanding reasoning powers of more than ordinary acuteness, for the age, and station of life, in which the subject of them was placed.

There is a case in one of the early volumes of Nicholson's Journal, translated from the personal narration of the author in a foreign publication, and since made more generally known by the treatises of Drs. Ferriar and Hibbert, which, in many respects, resembles the present. I allude to that of Nicolai, the Prussian Bookseller. It appears, that in consequence of great and repeated agitation of mind, occurring subsequently to the neglect of an habitual bloodletting, the apparition of a deceased person was presented to his view. This was afterwards followed, and for a length of time, by illusions of a most extraordinary description. The apparitions of persons, whether of departed friends, or of those living at a distance from him, sometimes singly, more frequently in considerable numbers, were of constant occurrence. The phantasms, however, were not always resemblances of friends, they were often entirely strange to him, and occasionally even animals presented themselves before him. After this had continued for some months he began to hear them speak. Usually, they addressed themselves to him in few words, such as those of consolation

coming from the apparitions of his most intimate friends ; but sometimes they appeared to carry on a conversation with one another. For a full account of the particulars of this extraordinary case, I must refer to the works before mentioned, confining the subsequent remarks to such points as more especially bear upon the case related above.

As far as appears from the narrative of Nicolai, the illusions, in both instances, were connected with a similar physical state of the cerebral organs. There was, in each, a preternatural fulness of the vessels of the head : thus, in Nicolai, the phantasms were excited by an agitating cause, following the neglect of an habitual bloodletting ; while, as he afterwards states, they immediately disappeared under the use of leeches to the temples. In the case of E. R., they were obviously connected with that state of the cerebral circulation, which has been termed determination of blood to the head ; evinced by the preceding headach, gradual loss of the memory, &c., terminating in the occurrence of the amaurosis ; and, also, by the immediate relief arising from the local abstraction of blood, by the same means which proved successful in the case of Nicolai. Her mind had likewise been much agitated by causes of distress before alluded to.

Some curious speculations connected with the subject of apparitions, naturally arise from a consideration of the phenomena in such cases as this. A very interesting one is, the liability of the nerves of sensation to become affected with false impressions, through the medium of the brain.

When, in the obscurity of twilight, a white post, or the stump of an old tree, is taken for a spec-

tre, it is obvious that an erroneous idea of an existing object is formed in the mind, from a defective impression made upon the sense of sight. If, however, the object be approached, a nearer view, or an examination by the sense of touch, corrects the previous impression, and tends to remove the erroneous nature of the idea which had been before excited. This is, in fact, merely and simply an example of the *deceptio visûs*, with which, at present, we have nothing to do. But when the illusion has its seat in the mind ; when there is no primary external action in the deceived sense ; it is obvious that the false impression made upon that sense, is to be accounted for altogether on different principles, and will also be regulated by different laws. To give any satisfactory explanation of the causes of illusions of this kind, is quite out of our power ; but in some instances, they appear to be connected with fulness of the vessels of the brain, though as to the mode in which this vascular fulness acts in the production of phantasms, we are entirely in the dark.

It has been supposed, by some authors, that illusions of this description are usually confined to the sense of sight, and that the sense of touch is rarely liable to be affected by them. "The ideas, which have their origin in the affections of our muscular frame," observes Dr. Hibbert, "much less frequently delude us than those of vision or hearing ;" and he goes on to say, that the ideas derived from an examination with the sense of touch, "often afford the very means by which we ascertain whether an apparition is true or false." In confirmation of his remarks, the authority of Shakspeare is brought

forward, when Macbeth, catching at the air-drawn dagger, and finding that it eludes his grasp, exclaims—

"Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind?"

And again—

"Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other
senses,
Or else worth all the rest."

But this is merely the high-wrought imagery of a poetical fiction, and cannot, therefore, be allowed the force of argument in a grave and philosophical discussion. It may, however, be urged, that the writings of Shakspeare are so consonant to the truth of nature, that illustrations derived from them are entitled to more than common consideration. This will, however, form no objection, when it is considered that the ideas formed of the supposed unsubstantial nature of these aerial shades, are such as to lead to the supposition that they must necessarily elude the grasp of mortal hand. Thus, Virgil, in the meeting of Æneas with the shade of Anchises, describes the spirit as eluding the attempted embrace of his son.

"Ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum;
Ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago,
Par levibus ventis, volucrique simillima somno."

And again, Shakspeare makes Marcellus, speaking of the Ghost in Hamlet, exclaim—

"We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery."

These, however, are not actual occurrences, but the opinions of Shakspeare and Virgil, and are too refined for those who are commonly the subjects of spectral appearances; and the nature of the illusion in such

persons as are unacquainted with, or uninfluenced by them, will, I conceive, always partake of the circumstances under which it occurs.

The sense of touch, then, may be less frequently subjected to illusory sensations, than the senses of sight and hearing; but there is no reason to believe that it is not equally liable to be acted upon; and the sole reason why the illusion less frequently takes place, appears to be, either the original idea formed of the nature of phantasms, or the unwillingness of those who believe in apparitions, to come in close contact with the creations of their own disordered imaginations. When, however, in this last case, the contact has been supposed to take place by the subject of an apparition, the sense of touch, in the instances with which I am acquainted, has been equally the sport of illusion with the other senses.

Lord Byron seems to have felt the full force of this, when, in the siege of Corinth, he describes the apparition of Francisca standing by the side of Alp, the Renegade, and pleading with him to return to the creed of his fathers.

"Upon his hand she laid her own—
Light was the touch, but it thrill'd to the bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fix'd him beyond the power to start.
Though slight was the grasp so mortal cold."

The case of E. R. remarkably illustrates this view of the subject, the illusions having affected the sense of touch, as well as the senses of sight and hearing. When she conceived herself to be grasped by the death-cold hand of her deceased parent, the illusion appears to have been complete. In the celebrated apparition which is reported to have

occurred in the B——d family, there was the same affection of the three senses ; in connection, however, with other circumstances, which, whatever explanation they may admit of, can hardly be accounted for upon Dr. Hibbert's theory of past feelings renovated.

The sense of smell, also, under appropriate circumstances, becomes the subject of illusion ; witness the sulphureous odor commonly experienced, or, at least, said to be experienced, in the narrated apparitions of the inhabitants of the lower world, whether of the powers of darkness themselves, or of the spirits of those supposed to be subjected to their domination.

To extend these remarks to a greater length, would be unsuitable in this place, and foreign to the objects of the present paper. But this subject is one of great interest, and presents many points well worthy of consideration by those who have time and inclination for the pursuit.—*Midland Med. & Surg. Rep.*

II.

ON THE ACTIVE PRINCIPLE TO BE OBTAINED FROM NATIVE PLANTS.

THE following remarks, published in a valuable contemporary, point to a species of investigation which we should like to see pursued with more vigor and enterprise than it now is.

As the season is now advancing when the votaries of Flora are again about to resume their delightful pursuit, permit me once more to call the attention of your readers to the harvest of medicinal resources, which await the analytical laborer in investigating the active principle of some of our indigenous plants.

Already has this active system been detected in the humulus, hyoscyamus, conium, and some other native plants ; and from the few imperfect experiments I have attempted, I feel satisfied that, to the operative chemist, who shall possess the time and means for that nicety of manifestation so essential to success, a rich mine of valuable materials to the medical art, will be the reward of his labors. In this age of research, it is not too much to hope, that a greater simplicity in separating the active principle of vegetables, may render the task of analysis much more economical than it now is, and may open a wider field of discovery. The measure of success, however, must depend not a little on the choice of proper native plants. Every one's own judgment will point out those parts of a plant most likely to yield successful results, but experience will be the best guidē in this selection. My examination for the present has been but very superficial, of such plants, e. g., as the pyrola minor, solidago, fumaria, bistorta, achillea, and a few others ; yet, in most of these, it was obvious that a much more concentrated principle was attainable by the agency of chemistry, than we have ever yet been able to extract by the ordinary means. These, therefore, I recommend to future experimentalists. Some, indeed, are of opinion, that medicinal substances are more efficacious as they are presented to us by the hand of nature, than when administered in their isolated form, or modified by the hand of man. Yet, that this is not universally true, is shown in the instance of the sulphate of quinine, and some others ; and without presuming, as some have done, that nature has, in every climate, provided appro-

priate remedies to diseases, it will be conceded, by every competent examiner, that a more than merited neglect has been the lot of some of our most valuable indigenous productions. Whatever the causes were which brought about this neglect, it is bootless now to explain—one of them, however, is undoubtedly to be found in the rhapsodical terms in which the older writers speak of their virtues, and we daily witness the baneful effects of overstrained eulogy in our best medicines, some of which, from this cause, have sunk as much too low in the scale of professional estimation, as they were before exalted too highly. If chemistry, too, by her brilliant discoveries, has contributed her share in producing this supersession of vegetable remedies, she is now compensating for the loss, by enabling us to extort from the vegetable kingdom, their active principles in a more minute form, and in some instances to create a new and more energetic power. Time, however, can alone enable us to pronounce more decidedly on the value of these new discoveries. Great indeed are his merits, who, from whatever country it may be obtained, shall add one more to the stock of valuable resources we already possess; but greater still is his, who shall detect and elicit, from the natural productions of his own country, some hitherto unknown power, which, while it unfolds the wonders of creative wisdom, may be made a welcome instrument of relief in the hour of sickness, and graft the welfare of the species on the triumphs of science.

III.

CASES OF MERCURIAL SALIVATION, RELIEVED BY THE MURIATIC ACID. BY ALEXANDER H. PECK, M.D., OF PORT GIBSON, MISSISSIPPI.

Communicated in a Letter to one of the Editors of the Transylvania Journal of Medicine.

SIR,—Having observed the remarks on the treatment of salivation in several of your last numbers, by different gentlemen, and with different remedies, I take the liberty of relating two cases that came under my treatment, of the malignant, dry, or concentrated form.

July 16th, 1830.—I visited a beautiful little girl, æt. 11, of the sanguineous temperament, and found her with a high grade of bilious fever, which had been present two or three days, the exacerbations attending daily. One day, without any perceptible abatement, it would continue for twelve hours; the following day it would be characterized by a type of slight remissions: a livid spot upon either cheek appeared and disappeared during this day; and thus, with all the general accompanying symptoms—rather full and quick pulse, burning skin, tongue coated with a brown fur, glossy eye and delirium—did the disease continue, in despite of a prompt and uninterrupted continuance of the febrile agents generally, for fifteen days.

29th.—I had the satisfaction to find her apparently convalescent, and free from unnatural vascular excitement: the system was calm, and without prostration.

August 1st.—I extracted the bicuspids of the left superior maxilla, which was hanging loose: it was fangless, owing to pressure above from the new tooth. Immediately,

in that space occupied by the tooth, and extending to either side, a black speck was visible of about the size of one's finger nail, which seemed the effects of a salivation, although there was no flow of saliva, nor the slightest mercurial odor in her breath.

2d.—The mercurial odor now present, the sudden extension of the gangrene, the enlargement of the cheek and face, half concealing the eye, placed the disease in its true light. The usual applications for ordinary cases of this disease were resorted to ; as strong a solution of the sulph. cupri as could be borne was applied ; cold ablutions to the head generally ; and 20 grains comp. pow. jalap ordered twice a day.

3d.—The right cheek now as much swollen as the left was yesterday ; the left eye nearly concealed ; gangrene fast extending. I was told by the attendants, that night not only brought on its accustomed glooms to the sick, but a burning fever to the little patient : prescription continued as before—the cathartic operating well, about three times a day.

4th.—To-day she could not have been recognised by her nearest relatives, her whole head was so deformed by swelling, with great protrusion of the lips—complained of no local pain, but uttered a low moaning noise. A stench now attended, too disgusting and offensive to be borne : a musquito bar was requisite to prevent the swarms of flies from their depredations, and she was evidently sinking as fast as the violence of the disease could carry her, without our having made the least arrest of its progression. The treatment being found wholly inadequate, was changed ; not, however, till we had witnessed, with

the attending physician, a case whose passing similitude to the one above was truly striking. It was a little girl 13 miles off, the type of whose fever, and duration, had been of the very nature of the one related—of the same age and temperament ; the gangrene had also located in the same part of the mouth, and was also of the dry species. The only difference was, that her right cheek was gangrenous, whilst that now before us was confined exclusively to the left part of the mouth ; and to render the similitude in the cases still more striking, the bicuspid in both had been removed, and were found fangless. Commiserating the unhappy fate of these two little girls, we recollected curing a stubborn case of phagedena two months before, after many agents of the stimulating class had failed, with a strong solution of *muratic acid*. It was resorted to—equal parts of rain water and of the acid being mixed. With a pair of scissors, I exsected some sloughs of the gangrene from the roof of her mouth, which presented a greyish aspect within. The solution was insinuated with a feather into the portions exposed to exsection, and between the gangrene and the jaw bone, which was partly bare. A solution of carb. sodæ was used as a counter-agent, when the acid should fall upon the healthy parts. The cathartic was continued as before : 60 grains of the compound were given during the day.

5th.—The gangrene had extended so rapidly, that now, in five days from its commencement, it covered one half the mouth posteriorly, and was bounded as follows—to wit, from just behind the left incisor to the back of the farthest molar, and from the inside of the cheek, which

was now affected the size of a 25 cent piece, to the junction of the palatine and superior maxillary bones. The solution had been used some half a dozen times during the preceding day and night, causing little or no uneasiness, probably from not touching the vital portions: much larger sloughs were now removed from adjoining the alveolæ of the bone, and also from the inside of the cheek, which was now nigh perforated. The stimulating lotion continued as before. Nocturnal fever reported to be increasing in violence with the other symptoms.

6th.—The patient was enjoying a sound sleep at the time of my visit, which she had been long deprived of, nor had she experienced a moment's repose since early on the preceding day. I was told that, after our departure on yesterday morning, an inflamed surface had appeared over the gangrene in the cheek, externally, which continued through the day, but at night disappeared; that the acid had been insinuated and applied freely to the disease throughout the day and early part of the night, when it caused such excruciating and even agonizing pain, that it was discontinued: the fever was attended with considerable delirium, which kept her tossing from side to side of the bed, and, therefore, they had discontinued doing anything more, "that she might die in as little pain as possible:" her cathartic was reported to have operated well. We left her without awaking her.

7th.—On inspection, found that the progress of the gangrene, if not arrested, was retarded: her head and face appeared rather diminished. The disappearing of the inflamed circle, and the present sensitiveness of the part, gave us strong

hopes. The solution was diluted and continued, the cathartic operating well.

8th.—The swelling of the right side of her face had disappeared: the now evident change in the aspect of the mouth, the healthy rising against the unhealthy portion, and the sprightly look of the little sufferer, produced sensations that are to be conceived but by him who has experienced them; her appetite was returning; the mercurial odor and her fever were retreating.

10th.—She walked across the room several times to-day, without assistance: by this time, too, her face had recovered pretty nearly its proper dimensions, and all appearances of salivation were ended. The part now presented a uniform, even, red surface: a portion of the alveola of the jaw, containing three teeth, including the one removed, was found separated from the other parts, which was removed with a pair of forceps, without the least difficulty, a week or two afterwards, and left no deformity to the contour of her face.

To-day we learned the fate of the other little girl, whom we saw accidentally on the 4th. A few days previous, the gangrene had penetrated her cheek externally, which sloughed—another day, and her chin sloughed—and on the next, she died.

Case 2d.—Sept. 27th, 1830.—I. J., son of A. J., æt. 8, of sanguineous temperament, residing on the high ground adjoining the swamp of Big Black River, was found laboring under a violent attack of congestive bilious fever, which he had had for several days. The cerebral and abdominal vessels were alike congested, attended with al-

most constant delirium during the exacerbation: he was blooded, nauseated, blistered, and the whole class of the ordinary febrifuge remedies resorted to; the mercurials taken had to be followed with the most drastic cathartics, croton oil, &c.

October 3d.—His system being greatly relieved of its morbid fullness and excitement, and being considerably better, a gangrenous spot was discovered inside his right cheek, which, when excised, left a cavity large enough to bury a large-sized pea: directly against this, on the upper jaw, another gangrene, about one inch and a half in extent, was seen. Here again as much of the gangrene as could be conveniently, was removed. In respect to dryness of the mouth, this case was also similar to the former. The muriatic acid was diluted to about one-fifth acid to four parts of rain water in bulk. The application was used a day or two. On the fourth day after its commencement, we were told that not even a scar could be seen, so complete had been the relief.

Were we asked how this agent acts, we should draw our inference from the qualities of the successful remediate articles themselves, employed generally for this disease, which, in our humble opinion, give its nature and their *modus operandi*—to wit, *that it is one of those local forms of inflammation exhibiting a deficient action, a debility, if you please, in the vessels generally.* To discuss the different forms of inflammation, is not our province; every one is familiar with the two general grades, in common language, over and under action. The identical means most prompt and efficient for this latter order of inflammation, when applied to salivation,

are attended with like success: in scalds and burns, which are also of the same kind, what is so adequate as the ol. terebinth.? Dr. Geddings tells us that salivation yields quickly to it also; and, medicated proportionally to the violence of the disease, in partial cases he has diluted it, while in others it required the entire strength of the application. Indeed, on a reference to the many supposed specifics for this affection, we find those only of use which operate in this manner: among them may be enumerated sulphur, cold, porter, astringent gargles, charcoal, rhus glabrum, fumigations of cinnabar, emetics, ol. terebinth., &c. &c. The most useful of these will be here noticed.

The operation of cold for a certain length of time, is well known to give an exhilarating tonicity, if I may so speak, to any part of the system, particularly in low grades of inflammation;—whether applied by ablutions, in ice or snow, or through the medium of cool air, the effect is identical.

Astringent gargles are the ordinary and every-day applications, and are considered to act by constringing the vessels: remediate articles, of almost every class, are changed in their effects as they are in proportion; for instance, one of the emetics may be made expectorant, diaphoretic, cathartic, emetic, or diuretic, according to the size of the dose. These mineral washes, when portioned delicately, are astringent: hence their utility in inflammation of the eye, in which they produce the most soothing sensations; but give their whole strength to the solution, as is customary in salivation, and a quick and almost lacerating pain is instantly felt.

The most conspicuous of the remainder that deserve a notice, are emetics, which we are told have given marked relief in some cases. The well-known virtues of this class, in all states of diseased or debilitated action of the system (when, however, there is not general exhaustion), in giving it a powerful tonicity, need not be advocated here. Their action through the medium of the general system, produces precisely similar effects to those more locally resorted to; hence they are a stimulant to the debilitated salivary vessels.

To conclude;—the decided, prompt, and efficient relief, afforded by the use of muriatic acid, one of the strongest of the stimuli, is but the verification of an adage, which is as applicable to medicine as politics, that the usefulness, or true test of a principle, is best established by the facility of its adaptation to extreme cases.

For an apology for dwelling upon two apparently isolated cases with such stress, we have to say, that in Warren county alone, where these occurred, five cases came to our knowledge of this dry form of gangrenous salivation, in the space of a few months, all of which proved *mortal*—a tolerable indication of its general occurrence, and its usual termination.

Why the mercurial preparation evinced this particular grade in its effects, probably might be learned on reference to the identical cases. The subjects of this form, as far as our knowledge extends, were of the sanguineous temperament; great vascular action obtained in the type of fever; they were uncommonly stubborn too; the state of excitement continued violent until its departure; the secretories were consequently above their pro-

per secreting point: a scorching and almost vertical sun, from its uninterrupted course, had even destroyed vegetation in some places; from the departure, then, of febrile excitement, all the prerequisites for salivation, in its most marked form, prevailed. The system, after having imbibed successive portions at every succeeding dose, by the time the excitement was allayed, had its mercurial capacity overburthened; the secretories were relaxed, and rather below a healthy standard; great heat prevailed, a well-known and important auxiliary; when diseased action was therefore directed to those glands, the onus became too great, and instead of a gentle, and oftentimes desired flow of saliva, nerves, muscles, ligaments and bones were destroyed.

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LITHOTRITY.

At a late meeting of the Academy of Medicine in Paris, M. Civiale addressed a communication on the subject of the operation for which he is so justly and so generally celebrated. He observes that of 173 operations on record which had been successfully performed, 166 were practised conformably to his method, and 152 were by himself. In all the remaining instances, some untoward occurrence had, in a greater or less degree, defeated the success of the process. He concluded, therefore, that the various modifications which had been proposed, however creditable to the ingenuity of their authors, could not have been found, in practice, to possess any advantage over

his own method. In speaking of the progress of the operation in Germany and Italy, he remarked that in both countries, though warmly adopted at first, it had fallen into some disrepute, in consequence of a few failures, and that there was some danger of its being finally abandoned. We observe, with pride and satisfaction, that a practitioner in our own country, Dr. Smith, of Danville, Kentucky, has performed this difficult operation with success. A very brief account of the case is given in the *N. A. Journal* for July, under the head of *Surgical Intelligence*. It appears from this, that Dr. S. has several cases under treatment, though he has completed but one. The patient in the last was a boy, only five years and seven months old. Five operations were required, each of which lasted about ten minutes. We mention no other particulars, as we intend publishing the case in our columns in the author's own words. But we regard it as no small matter of exultation, that an operation which has baffled the ingenuity of some of the first surgeons in Paris, and which is but just struggling into favor in Europe, should already have been naturalized, as it were, in our own country.

We had feared that, occupied as all our distinguished practitioners are in a constant round of very various duty, no one would be able to acquire that skill in the practice of lithotomy, which, in such men as Civiale and Leroy, has been the result of almost exclusive devotion to this single subject. We are happy to find ourself undeceived in this respect, and wait with much impatience

to hear farther accounts of the success of our countrymen in the practice of this important and difficult art.

PATHOLOGY OF JAUNDICE.

THE appearance of the skin and the nature of the discharges in jaundice, have given rise to the idea that an obstruction takes place in the ducts, by which the bile is prevented from passing into the duodenum. Cases of the disease are so seldom fatal, as to afford but limited opportunities of settling this point by actual examination. Seven cases, however, terminated fatally in the wards of *La Charité* in Paris, in 1828, 1829, and 1830, in which jaundice existed in a severe form. On examination, six of the seven were found to present no obstruction whatever of the biliary ducts. In the seventh they were impervious, being involved with the gallbladder, part of the liver, and part of the pancreas, in a cancerous mass of the size of the fist. In several of the cases, the liver is said to have appeared of a pale yellow color, and in one only to have contained an unusual quantity of bile.

LIVING SKELETON.

WHILST that miserable being, by the name of Edson, who was known here under the above title about a year since, was exhibiting himself in Paris, it appears that with the view of extending his reputation, he offered himself as an object of curiosity to the Academy, who appointed M. Larrey to examine him, and report accordingly. The distinguished academician not being able to attend to this duty, his confrère, M.

Arago, undertook it in his stead. His report was read at the meeting of the Academy, the 21st of December last. As his condition in one or two respects seems to have altered since he left here, it may perhaps be interesting to those of our readers who recollect his person, to see an abstract of M. Arago's remarks. After speaking of the general facts regarding his place of birth, early history, &c., the reporter arranges the most remarkable circumstances of his condition in the following manner:—

1. There is a reduction of the bulk of the person in all its dimensions, even the height being less than when in a healthy state.

2. The muscles, which can be perfectly well examined through the skin, appear as small, dense cords, being deprived, to a great degree, of their interstitial cellular substance.

3. The heart, which beats very feebly, is smaller than a natural size, and seems to have partaken of the general emaciation.

4. The teeth are rendered naked by the absorption of the gums, and some of the incisors are wanting. He has been affected with chronic ophthalmia, which has terminated in ulceration of the cornea, so that he is now entirely blind.

5. The excretions are regular, but small, and in proportion to the quantity of food taken. The urine is turbid.

6. The hair is thin and nearly white.

7. The senses, with the exception of the loss of sight above mentioned, remain unaffected. The mind is clear, and he gives proof of considerable capacity.

8. The reproductive powers are not impaired. He has four children, all in excellent health.

POISONED CHEESE.

WE have received for analysis a piece of a cheese which was last week retailed by a grocer at the south part of the city, in small quantities, and which produced, in the numerous individuals who ate it, all the phenomena usually resulting from the introduction of this substance into the stomach. Should the nature of the poison be detected, it will be made known next week.—It is stated in the letter accompanying this piece of cheese, that it was brought to this city by the same person who sold that which similarly affected a military company a few years ago. If this be correct, the circumstance may possibly lead to a discovery of the source of the empoisonment, which is doubtless unintentional and unknown to the manufacturer.

ANOTHER NEW STYPTIC.

A MR. BONNAFOUX is said to have invented a preparation which, applied in the form of powder to incised wounds, has a wonderful efficacy in arresting hemorrhage. He asserts that in an individual in whom the brachial artery had been divided by a severe wound in the arm, the introduction of some lint covered with this substance checked the discharge from the bleeding orifice, and rendered any operation unnecessary. A profuse hemorrhage from leech-bites, which could not be otherwise restrained, was arrested in the same

way. In several amputations performed on animals, the same application has proved entirely efficacious in stopping the discharge of blood from the divided arteries. He maintains that the effect of the application is unequivocal, wholly independent of pressure, and that it succeeds where the best directed pressure fails of success. He explains its *modus operandi* by supposing it to be astringent, and, in virtue of this property, to obliterate the orifice of the divided vessel. The composition of the substance is as yet a secret.

**CHOLERA—ITS COURSE IN PERSIA
AND RUSSIA—THE REPORT OF
ITS APPEARANCE IN ENGLAND.**

THE report which found its way into some of our newspapers, that the cholera was broken out in London, is, we are happy to say on the best possible authority, altogether without foundation. It probably arose from the prevalence, in some parts of that metropolis, of a fever of a severe type, some account of which we hope to offer the reader next week.

A distinguished physician in the Russian service, has been recently engaged in investigating the details of the progress of the cholera, with a view to ascertain whether or not it is propagated by contagion. From the following and other facts, he arrives at the conclusion that it is contagious, and that its spreading so extensively in the north of Europe is altogether independent of atmospheric influence.

In the spring of 1830, says the physician above referred to, the cholera appeared at Corason, the resi-

dence of Abbas Mirza, in Persia, where several of the Russian mission died of it, and Prince Dolgonrowky, the minister, narrowly escaped after a severe attack. In July it broke out in the Russian province of Schirvan and Bacon; whence it found its way by land to Tiflis, and by sea, from the port of Bacon to Astracan. In these towns it made its appearance nearly at the same time, viz., about July 20th. No precautions were taken, and it extended rapidly throughout Georgia, always following the course of the principal roads; and in no instance did it appear in any village, or in houses, unless individuals from the infected towns visited them. A Moravian village, almost in the immediate line of road, thus entirely escaped, while the disease raged around it. Alarm having been excited at Bacon, many persons fled along the Volga, and carried the disease with them, which appeared at Jondayersk on the 22d of July; at Krasnoyar on the 25th; at Tzarilzin on the 6th of August; Donbooka and Saratoff on the 7th; at Khvalnisk on the 19th; Novogorod on the 27th; Koshoma on the 3d of September; Yaroslaff, 6th; and at Rybinsk on the 10th. In all these places, the first victims were navigators of the Volga, or others arrived from places where it already raged. A Cossack, sent to buy food at Donbooka, on the Volga, died on the 7th, after his return to Katchalinskaia, on the Don; and thence the disease rapidly spread through the Cossack villages.

The first deaths at Novitcherkask, the principal town of the Cossacks, took place on the 18th of August; and at Tagonrog, September 9th.

From Saratoff, multitudes of the inhabitants escaped again into Persia, but the disease followed them, and it was carried to Moscow by a student from Saratoff, whose servant had died on the road, and who was himself the first victim in the Russian capital. All communication

was instantly cut off between the military school at Moscow and the rest of the town; not one case of cholera occurred in the establishment. In no instance was the propagation of the disease traceable to goods; it was dependent on the actual presence of individuals laboring under it. It never broke out after a quarantine of twenty-one days; and, in the great majority of cases, the attack took place within a week after exposure to the contagion.

Antiphlogistic Treatment of Cutaneous Diseases.—In a clinical lecture, Dr. Elliotson threw out some important observations on the antiphlogistic treatment of diseases of the skin. A girl was admitted "into St. Thomas's hospital" with impetigo of her arms and various parts of the body. She had headach, drowsiness, giddiness, and full pulse. She was put on very low diet, and bled from time to time (the blood being generally inflamed), while mercury was moderately exhibited. By this treatment, and this alone, the patient was soon cured of her impetigo, without any quackeries of local applications. In another case, where the eruption might be termed eczema, the same treatment was adopted, and the same results ensued. There is no doubt, as Dr. Johnson remarks, that the majority of cutaneous diseases are more than skin deep, and would oftener give way to proper medicines internally exhibited, more especially with low diet, than to the farrago of external remedies.

New Crystalline Substance obtained from Columbo—Columbine.

—Mr. Wittstock, of Berlin, has recently succeeded in extracting the bitter principle of columbo in a crystalline form. We derive the following particulars from the *Journal de Pharmacie*, of February, 1831.—Columbo is first exhausted by means of alcohol of the sp. gr. 835. The

alcohol is then distilled off till the tincture is reduced one third, or one quarter; and the remainder is allowed to rest for some days. Crystals are deposited, which are to be washed, and subsequently boiled with a little alcohol and animal charcoal. The crystals are thus obtained pure. They may also be procured in a very short time by acting on columbo with ether (.725), and abandoning the resulting liquor to spontaneous evaporation.

Columbine crystallizes in transparent quadrilateral prisms with a rhomboidal base. It is inodorous and extremely bitter, without alkaline or acid properties, soluble in thirty or forty parts of boiling alcohol, or ether, at common temperatures, yet imparting to these liquids a strongly bitter taste. It is also soluble in the volatile oils, and in caustic alkaline solutions, from which it is precipitated by the acids. The best solvent of this new principle is acetic acid (1.040), which takes up about as much as boiling alcohol. Sulphuric acid colors it, at first orange yellow, then deep red; and water separates it from the solution of a light rusty color. Exposed to heat, it melts like wax, and at a higher temperature is decomposed, without yielding ammonia. Its solution in alcohol and acetic acid is not affected by tincture of galls, by nitrate of silver, acetate of lead, nor other metallic salts.

The bitter principle of columbo discovered by M. Planche, in 1811, appears to be columbine mixed with a little coloring matter. M. Planche did not procure it in a crystalline form.

New Mode of reducing Phosphorus to Powder.—M. Casasecca proposes to substitute for distilled water,

alcohol at 36, with which the phosphorus should be agitated in a stoppered phial. The phosphorus is thus quickly divided into an extremely

fine powder of a crystalline appearance.—*Observatore Medico.*

Poisonous Secretion from the Body of a Horse.—A horse in the town of Benton, in this county, was discovered to be ailing by his owner, and considerably bloated. Incisions were made through the skin in different parts of the body, from which proceeded a kind of liquid matter resembling honey. The appearance was not so singular as its poisonous qualities. We learn that those attending him, not apprehending danger, were less cautious about diffusing it upon the hands and arms.—Wherever it touched, it produced a most surprising effect. The skin first blistered, and then seemed to yield to the poison by breaking away, and presented the flesh in a cankered state. They were alarmed, and immediately called medical aid, which, we are happy to learn, was so successful as to stop its ravages. The horse still lives.—*Penn. Yan. Gaz.*

Sovereign Remedies.—A writer in the Traveller gives an account of his being cured of St. Vitus's Dance by a decoction of the bark of the wild black cherry tree, "with spirit enough to keep it from moulding," which he drank at the suggestion of a friend. He then concludes that the bark of the wild black cherry tree is a "sovereign remedy" against that disease. The facility with which this captivating title is acquired in our days, shows how little confidence we should place in those remedies on which it is conferred.

Whole number of deaths in Boston the fortnight ending July 23d, 39. Males, 24—Females, 13. Stillborn, 2.

Of consumption, 5—fits, 2—suicide, 2—liver complaint, 1—dropsy on brain, 1—mortification in bowels, 1—dropsy, 1—unknown, 1—apoplexy, 2—bursting bloodvessel, 1—scarlet fever, 2—drowned, 1—delirium tremens, 1—sudden, 1—intemperance, 3—childbed, 1—lung fever, 1—infantile, 1—wounds, 1—inflammation in bowels, 1—nervous affection, 1—diarrhœa, 1—ulcers, 1—old age, 1.

ADVERTISEMENT.

MEDICAL SCHOOL IN BOSTON.

THE MEDICAL LECTURES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY delivered in Boston will be commenced in the Autumn, at the usual period, viz., on the *third Wednesday in October*. They will be continued four months.

This extension in the term of the Lectures has been thought necessary to afford time for such a course of instruction and demonstration, as is deemed by the Faculty to be requisite, under the advantages which have recently accrued to the School.

The Legislature of Massachusetts, with an enlightened liberality, which does honor to our age and country, have extended the protection of law to the cultivation of Anatomy within this Commonwealth. The advantages which will hence result to students resorting to this school will be sufficiently obvious. It will be the aim of the Professors to carry into effect the intentions of the Legislature, in such a manner as to evince at the same time their respect for the rights of humanity, and their interest in the promotion of the healing art.

The opportunities for practical instruction at the Massachusetts General Hospital continue undiminished.

The Courses of Lectures will be,

On Anatomy and Surgery, by Dr. WARREN.

On Chemistry, by Dr. WEBSTER.

On Materia Medica, by Dr. BIGELOW.

On Obstetrics and Medical Jurisprudence, by Dr. CHANNING.

On Theory and Practice of Physic and on Clinical Medicine, by Dr. JACKSON.

WALTER CHANNING, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.

Boston, June 15, 1831.

July 19. * 6t.

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